

U. S. S. MISSOURI

OVER THIS SPOT
ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1945
THE INSTRUMENT
OF FORMAL SURRENDER
OF JAPAN TO THE ALLIED POWERS
WAS SIGNED

THUS BRINGING TO A CLOSE
THE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE SHIP AT THAT TIME
WAS AT ANCHOR
IN TOKYO BAY

LATITUDE OF 35° 17' NORTH LONGITUDE 139° 43' EAST

U. S. S.

M I S S I L E

OVER TWO SPOT
ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1945
THE DISTRICT
OF FORMAL
TO THE ALLIED POWERS
WAS GIVEN
OF JAPAN TO A CLOSE
THIS SECOND WOULD BE

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THE SECOND WOULD BE

LATITUDE 16° 18' 00" NORTH
LONGITUDE 109° 45' 30" EAST

OVER THIS SPOT
ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1945
THE INSTRUMENT
OF FORMAL SURRENDER
OF JAPAN TO THE ALLIED POWERS
WAS SIGNED
THUS BRINGING TO A CLOSE
THE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE SHIP AT THAT TIME
WAS AT ANCHOR
IN TOKYO BAY

NORTH 35° 31' 17" LONGITUDE 139° 45' 33"

Memorandum for Mr. Burgess,
Curator of Exhibits

July 28, 1956

On the 27th of July at the invitation of Major Collings I went down to the War Memorial Museum to see a brass plate purported to be the original plate let into the deck of the MISSOURI to mark the spot on the deck of the MISSOURI where the formal instrument of surrender of Japan was signed. This plate was sent to the War Memorial Museum by a man named H. L. Dobson, Box 451, Cayce, South Carolina. Major Collings delivered the plate to me and I brought it to the Mariners Museum. The following information I received from Major Collings with respect to the arrival of that plate at his Museum:

The man named Dobson called Major Collings by telephone on the 25th of July and said that he had the original plate from the deck of the MISSOURI. He said that this plate had been put into place in the deck of the MISSOURI and then taken out. He said further that he had started to clean it up which he had abandoned (see scratch marks on plate). Collings told Dobson to abandon trying to clean up the plate which on later inspection showed that it did not need cleaning, and just ship it up to him. Mr. Dobson then went into a sales talk to try to sell Major Collings for \$15,000 an automobile which he says was used by some general in Europe or in Japan (Major Collings was not sure). Mr. Dobson also said that he had other relics. Mr. Dobson said that the MISSOURI plate was a gift. By this memorandum I am turning over custody of this plate received from Major Collings to the Curator of Exhibits. You will find it in my office. Please take it away.

This plate received by Mr. Collings may be of some interest or it may be a complete fake. You will note that on the reverse side it bears stamped on it the language "Original Number One". You will also note that there are no holes drilled in the plate and no means of attaching it to the deck of the MISSOURI. This is not necessarily an indication of it being a fake because the plate could be installed in a frame which was in turn secured to the deck. Major Collings has written to Mr. Dobson to try to find out how he obtained the plate and the whole history of it. It could well be that this was a trial plate and that it was not approved for installation.

I have had the plate photographed and will write to the Curator for the Navy Department and see if he knows anything about it or can identify Mr. Dobson. I will send you a copy of what I write to the Curator for the Navy Department.

E. W. Sylvester
Director

FWS:dsm

July 31, 1956

Curator for the Navy Department
Office of Chief of Naval Operations
Navy Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Admiral Heffernan:

I am enclosing photographs of the obverse and reverse of a brass plate which has come into the possession of this Museum recently. The plate is 18" in diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. It was donated to the War Memorial Museum of Virginia, Warwick, Virginia by a Mr. H. L. Dobson, Box 451, Cayce, South Carolina, and turned over to this Museum by the War Memorial Museum. On July 25, Mr. Dobson called Major George Collings, U.S. Army, retired, and told him that he had the original plate marking the surrender point on the quarterdeck of the MISSOURI and would like to donate it to the War Memorial Museum. He said that this was the original plate and was put in place aboard the ship but was afterwards removed and replaced by another plate.

The plate of which the picture is forwarded to you is clearly an extemporized job. It is apparently etched from a piece of stock brass. Its appearance is quite inferior to the casting now installed in the deck of the ship. I can conceive of the possibility of a temporary plate having been let into the deck and later replaced by a more finished marker. I would be most interested in establishing whether or not there was a temporary marker placed in the deck of the MISSOURI prior to the installation of the cast marker shown in the official U. S. Navy photograph on page 977 of Volume 72 of the Naval Institute Proceedings.

Shifting to a new subject, I would be very interested to know what final disposition was made of the Prinz Eugen. I hope it finds its way to Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

With kindest regards,

EWS:dsm

E. W. Sylvester

cc: Curator of Exhibits
Assistant Director

Historical File

BREMERTON GROUP, PACIFIC RESERVE FLEET
PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD
BREMERTON, WASHINGTON

IN REPLY REFER TO:

PT10/3024/01.2/te

AL2

Ser

15

28 SEP 1956

From: Commander Bremerton Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet

To: Curator for the Navy Department

Subj: USS MISSOURI (BB-63) Plate Marking Japanese Surrender Site;
information concerning

Ref: (a) CNO ltr Op-299:RKH:rw Ser 1552P29 of 10 Sep 1956

Encl: (1) Photo of plates re surrender site, USS MISSOURI

1. As requested by reference (a), an investigation of available records as to the authenticity of the plate presently set in the deck of the MISSOURI has been made with negative results. However, the records revealed that another plate was stowed in the pilferable gear locker.

2. As shown in enclosure (1), the plate presently set in the deck of the MISSOURI (left) is of cast embossed bronze, whereas the second plate (right) is of engraved Navy rolled brass.

3. There is no available information as to location of additional plates in the double-bottoms. Inasmuch as the MISSOURI is under preservation a thorough search of all voids, cofferdams and double-bottoms has not been made as such search would require many man hours and considerable expense. It is therefore requested that more specific information as to the location of the plates welded in place, be provided.

DOYLE M. COFFEY



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO
Op-299:RKH:isk
Ser 1552P29

9 Oct 1956

Rear Admiral E. W. Sylvester, USN(Ret)
Director, The Mariners Museum
Newport News, Virginia

Dear Admiral Sylvester:

This is in reference to the letter of the Assistant Director, Mr. Harold S. Sniffen, of 27 August 1956, wherein it was requested that it be determined whether or not the two surrender site plates in the double bottoms of the MISSOURI are still there.

Enclosed is a copy of the reply to our inquiry from the Commander, Bremerton Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet, forwarding a photograph of two plates presently on board the MISSOURI. Judging from the statements contained in the enclosed reply, it is possible that the two plates previously located in the double bottoms had been removed and stowed in the pilferable gear locker. The physical differences in the three plates are obvious when compared with each other.

As agreed in our conversation of 5 October, it is believed that Norfolk Naval Shipyard is the most likely place for identifying the plate in your possession.

F. Kent Loomis
F. Kent Loomis
Captain, USN (Ret.)
Asst. Director of Naval History

Encl:

- (1) Copy of ltr from Bremerton Group,
Pacific Reserve Fleet, FF10/BREM/01.2/te
A12 Ser 1888 dtd 28 Sep 1956 w/enc (1).